

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 05953 191459Z
ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-11 ISO-00 ACDA-12 CIAE-00
INR-10 IO-13 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-08 NRC-05
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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7737
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
/AMEMBASSY LONDON 3244
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCPAC
CINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 5953

MILITARY ADDRESSEES FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MUNC, PINT, PK, FR
SUBJECT: REPROCESSING ISSUE RETURNS TO THE PUBLIC ARENA

REF: (A) ISLAMABAD 5855 (B) ISLAMABAD 5493 (C) ISLAMABAD 5954
(D) ISLAMABAD 5663

1. SUMMARY: THE REPROCESSING ISSUE, WHICH HAD SLIPPED FROM PUBLIC VIEW DURING THE PAST FEW MONTHS, HAS RETURNED TO THE POLITICAL ARENA WITH THE REAPPEARANCE OF THE LAHORE EDITION OF THE RADICAL DAILY MUSAWAAT, WITH PRESIDENT GISCARD'S PRESS CONFERENCE REMARKS, AND WITH CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR (CMLA) GENERAL ZIA UL-HAQ'S JUNE "7 REAFFIRMATIOCCOF PAKISTAN'S "RESOLVE" TO ACQUIRE THE REPROCESSING PLANT IN REMARKS TO A NUCLEAR SEMINAR. END SUMMARY.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ISLAMA 05953 191459Z

2. THE ISSUE OF PAKISTAN'S ACQUISITION OF A NUCLEAR REPROCESSING PLANT FROM FRANCE HAS REENTERED THE PUBLIC POLITICAL ARENA IN PAKISTAN OVER THE PAST TEN DAYS. THE ISSUE HAD SEEMED TO SLIP FROM PUBLIC PROMINENCE DURING THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION'S (MLA) BAN ON THE LAHORE EDITION OF THE PRO-PAKISTAN PEOPLES PARTY (PPP) URDU DAILY MUSAWAAT (REFTEL B), WHICH HAD KEPT UP A

STEADY DRUMBEAT OF ACCUSATIONS OF US PRESSURE ON PAKISTAN (AND FRANCE) TO DROP THE PLANT AND WHICH HAD CONSISTENTLY CHIDED THE GOP FOR NOT ANNOUNCING THAT THE REPROCESSING PLANT DEAL WAS STILL ON TRACK. THE POLITICIANS HAD ALSO NEGLECTED THE ISSUE FOR A TIME, BEING PREOCCUPIED WITH THEIR OWN PURSUIT (OR AVOIDANCE) OF A POLITICAL GOVERNMENT WITH THE MLA (REF C).

3. THE ISSUE FIRST RESURFACED WITH POLITICAL OVERTONES ON JUNE 6 AS PPP FACTION LEADER MAULANA KAUSER NIAZI TOLD THE PRESS THAT

THERE WAS "NO PROOF" TO BHUTTO'S 1977 CHARGES THAT THE US HAD BEEN "INVOLVED" IN PAKISTAN'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS. FORMER FONMIN AZIZ AHMED, IN AN INTERVIEW WITH MUSAWAAT, WAS QUICK TO RETORT THAT BHUTTO HAD GIVEN ALL THE DETAILS OF THE ALLEGED US INTERFERENCE IN HIS APRIL 28, 1977 SPEECH TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, WHICH HAD LAUNCHED BHUTTO'S VIRULENT ANTI-AMERICAN CAMPAIGN. AHMED SAID THAT PART OF THE "PROOF" WAS THE "AMERICAN PRESSURE FOR THE CANCELLATION OF THE REPROCESSING PLANT" AND "KISSINGER'S WARNING TO BHUTTO THAT PAKISTAN WOULD FACE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES" IF IT WENT AHEAD WITH THE DEAL.

4. IN A JUNE 13 EDITORIAL, MUSAWAAT CLAIMED THAT THE "ROLE OF THE FOREIGN POWERS REGARDING PAKISTAN'S REPROCESSING PLANT BETRAYS THEIR DESIGNS." MUSAWAAT SAID THAT THE NATION IS UNANIMOUS IN ITS DESIRE TO ACQUIRE THE REPROCESSING PLANT.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ISLAMA 05953 191459Z

5. FRENCH PRESIDENT GISCARD'S STATEMENT ON THE REPROCESSING PLANT (REF A) RECEIVED WIDE PRESS COVERAGE HERE, AND CONTINUES TO BE THE SUBJECT OF SPECULATION. PRESS STORIES, EMANATING FROM LONDON, QUOTE LE MONDE AS SAYING THAT THE GOF INTENDS TO GO AHEAD WITH THE REPROCESSING DEAL, ALBEIT "MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO IMPROVE SAFEGUARD MEASURES." EARLIER PRESS SPECULATION HAD CENTERED ON THE POSSIBILITY OF FRENCH CANCELLATION (RED D).

6. CMLA GENERAL ZIA GOT HIMSELF BACK INTO THE ISSUE IN AN ADDRESS TO THE OPENING MEETING OF A CONFERENCE ON "PHYSICS AND CONTEMPORARY NEEDS" CURRENTLY BEING HELD IN PAKISTAN. BANNER HEADLINES ON JUNE 18 REPORTED THAT ZIA "REITERATED PAKISTAN'S RESOLVE TO ACQUIRE THE NUCLEAR REPROCESSING PLANT," SAYING IT IS "ESSENTIAL FOR THE OVERALL DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY," AND THAT PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM WOULD BE USED FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES.

7. COMMENT: THE HIATUS IN POLITICALLY-CHARGED PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF THE REPROCESSING DEAL WAS ALWAYS A BIT CHIMERAL, BASED AS IT WAS ON THE CLOSURE OF THE PAPER WHICH KEPT UP THE PRESSURE AND THE LACK OF ATTENTION FROM THE POLITICIANS. ALTHOUGH NIAZI'S

STATEMENT THAT THERE IS NO PROOF OF US INTERFERENCE IS CURIOUS
(ATTACKING THE US IS USUALLY A "NO-LOSE" PROPOSITION IN
PAKISTAN), IT IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE IT HAS RE-KINDLED THE
PUBLIC NUCLEAR DEBATE. CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL
ZIA, ONCE AGAIN HAVING BEEN REMINDED THAT PRESSURE FOR THE
PLANT'S ACQUISITION CAN STILL BE MADE A POWERFUL POLITICAL ISSUE
IN PAKISTAN, HAS TAKEN UP THE CHALLENGE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT
THERE HAS BEEN NO WEAKENING OF HIS RESOLVE AND TO ATTEMPT TO
EXPLOIT THE FRENCH PRESIDENT'S POSITIVE-SOUNDING REMARKS.
HUMMEL

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